

MINUTES OF THE
Lone Tree Planning Commission Meeting
May 13, 2014

Lone Tree Civic Center

1. Attendance

In attendance were:

Martha Sippel, Chair
Dave Kirchner, Vice-Chair
Rhonda Carlson, Planning Commissioner
Roy Kline, Planning Commissioner
Stephen Mikolajczak, Planning Commissioner
Herb Steele, Planning Commissioner

Commissioner Gary Godden was absent

Also in attendance from City staff were:
Kelly First, Community Development Director
Jennifer Drybread, Senior Planner

2. Regular Meeting Call to Order

Chair Sippel called the meeting to order and noted there was a quorum.

3. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest stated.

4. Minutes of the April 22, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Kirchner moved, and Commissioner Steele seconded, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Presentations

Comprehensive Plan Discussion Guest speakers: Diane Leavesley, Executive Director, Douglas County Housing Partnership; John Cotten, City of Lone Tree Public Works Director (Major Transportation Projects); Jennifer Drybread, City of Lone Tree Senior Planner (Complete Streets and wrap-up of speaker discussion).

Ms. Leavesley commended the City for its existing Comprehensive Plan principles promoting a spectrum of housing choices and affordability, and cited policies in the

Comprehensive Plan as well as the RidgeGate Planned Development provision to provide primary housing east of I-25.

Ms. Leavesley said the Douglas County Housing Partnership (DCHP) is a multi-jurisdictional housing authority formed by an Intergovernmental Agreement in 2003. As such, they have access to federal funding that they use to help people with their housing needs. DCHP provides homeownership programs, housing counseling and rental housing, assisting those making under 80% of the area median income. In Douglas County that means families with incomes \$60,000 or less. In Lone Tree, the DCHP has offered foreclosure counseling since 2008, assisting 73 residents starting in 2010. Approximately half of those families were able to stay in their homes through repayment or loan modification. Approximately one-quarter of them sold their homes through short sales (2010-2012) and another one-quarter sold for a profit (2013-2014). Two families experienced foreclosure.

Ms. Leavesley described several of the projects that DCHP is involved with including Lincoln Pointe Lofts, Auburn Ridge Senior Apartments and the Apex at Meridian. The Apex is opening in July of this year with 156 units. There are 450 families currently on the waiting list to live there. She said many of the people already work in the area but want to live closer, or live more affordably. They are also hearing from seniors who want to live near their children and grandchildren and be close to light rail.

Ms. Leavesley described the benefits of affordable housing including job creation (during construction and through increased consumer spending as a result of increased residual income); reduced likelihood of foreclosure due to appropriate loans and budgeting; attraction and retention of employees; and, attraction of businesses who say the ability of their work force to live nearby is an important factor in their site selection. She added that affordable housing reduces traffic congestion and air pollution and shared information from a recent report from the National Housing Conference about the role of affordable housing in creating jobs and stimulating local economic development.

Ms. Leavesley said that 75% of Douglas County residents leave the County each day for work. She concluded by noting that the City of Lone Tree has grown by an impressive 146% in population since 2000.

Commissioner Kirchner commented about housing programs in many mountain towns where there are various covenant restrictions relative to length of ownership or increased value. Ms. Leavesley responded that they do not have a similar program here.

Commissioner Steele inquired about rent control, project ownership and the process for being accepted as a resident, particularly when a project has more interested renters than units available. Ms. Leavesley said the application process is administered by trained staff and is documented and verified to meet Federal

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements. Ownership can vary but they are typically owned and managed by private entities subject to HUD controls. She said in the case of the Apex project, applicants are vetted on a first come, first served basis. She added that studies have shown that residents in Douglas County actually need 17% of affordable housing stock. She said they are not even close to meeting that need, but try to chip away at the problem.

Commissioner Kline inquired about the percentage of ownership versus rental units. Ms. Leavesley said she did not have an exact number. She said there are 200 families participating in the program overall. Commissioner Kline asked about for-sale condominium units. Ms. Leavesley said they do not currently offer those, although they would love to in the future. They are trying to build up their net worth to be able to partner in those types of projects in the future.

Commissioner Carlson asked whether there were affordable projects in the Town of Parker. Ms. Leavesley said there is Parker Hilltop, and there is also a project in Highlands Ranch. She said Douglas County has not seen new projects in some time due to the effect of interest rates and other financial factors. She said the Apex project was feasible because Shea Homes put up a lot of its own equity.

Commissioner Carlson asked how we could get closer to meeting the need for 17% affordable housing in Douglas County. Ms. Leavesley said at one time, Douglas County required developers to either build a certain amount of affordable units or provide cash-in-lieu. She said the County no longer does that and that economic conditions have made it difficult to address this concern.

Chair Sippel invited public comment and noted that there were no members of the audience requesting to speak.

Ms. Leavesley concluded her presentation and provided the Commissioners with copies of her slides and the report she had referenced.

Mr. John Cotten, City of Lone Tree Public Works Director, presented information about various transportation improvement projects including the I-25 Lane Balancing Project, C-470 widening, southeast light rail extension, the pedestrian bridge over Lincoln Avenue, the Kaiser Walk and Wheel Grant and Study, the circulator shuttle program, County Line Road interchange improvements, and RidgeGate Parkway widening east of I-25.

Commissioner Steele commented that a project like C-470 serves people who might otherwise pass through the City, and takes the burden off local streets. Mr. Cotten noted that this is an example where there may not be a direct benefit to Lone Tree residents, as most do not use C-470, although the City Council understands the importance of regional coordination and regional transportation improvements.

Commissioner Steele asked how much bike or pedestrian traffic is expected at the pedestrian bridge over Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Cotten said he hopes there will be quite a bit as it will align with strong trail connections north and south of Lincoln. Mr. Steele asked if the bridge would need a center support. Mr. Cotten said they hope to avoid that through innovations in design, but it is possible.

The Planning Commission asked several questions for clarification and additional information about the various projects. Relative to discussion on bike and pedestrian systems, Commissioner Sippel commented that the Willow Creek trail tunnel under C-470 is not a very inviting place. Commissioner Steele commented about high traffic speeds on Yosemite Street going north from Lincoln Avenue. Commissioner Kline asked about the circulator shuttle route to the Entertainment District. Mr. Cotten said that it can be a way for employees to get back and forth to lunch or services in that area without having to use a car.

Commissioner Mikolajczak commented about tolling interstates and why there seems to be such a problem in getting funding to pay for transportation improvements. Mr. Cotten elaborated on the larger problem with aging infrastructure and the need for roads to be rebuilt, not just maintained. Commissioner Mikolajczak asked whether the circulator shuttle would be run by alternative fuels. Mr. Cotten said that was a consideration in the proposals but that it is hard to get vehicles like that.

Chair Sippel invited public comment. Ms. Adrienne Leonard, representing TW Telecom at 10475 Park Meadows Drive, said she attended the meeting in hopes of learning more about possible transportation improvements along Park Meadows Drive that would improve pedestrian connectivity and access for Park Ridge Buildings One and Six. She indicated that they are working with the City on the shuttle program and have met with staff about access in the area. She said there are not good pedestrian connections between the two buildings and there are difficulties with vehicles trying to exit the Park Ridge One building turning left toward Lincoln Avenue. She said there are difficulties at Park Ridge Six because there is no designated right or left turn lanes at the signal, which causes backups. She said she found the presentations tonight very interesting and she just wanted to share TW Telecom's interest and answer any questions. Hearing no further comments on the matter, Chair Sippel introduced the next speaker.

Jennifer Drybread provided a brief presentation about Complete Streets, which is a term used to refer to streets that are for everyone, no matter who they are or how they travel. She discussed aspects of Complete Streets including safety, comfort and convenience and showed various examples of such streets and places where streets had been retrofitted to accommodate bikes, pedestrians, and buses in addition to cars. She reiterated Mr. Cotten's earlier comments about how this issue will be evaluated as part of the Kaiser Walk and Wheel Grant study, which is termed the "Community Wide Complete Streets Plan".

Commissioner Kirchner asked whether they should wait on consideration of Complete Street policies for the Comprehensive plan until the study is completed. Staff agreed that would be appropriate.

Commissioner Steele commented about the timing of walk signals for pedestrians and how in some places along Yosemite Street such as at Heritage Hills Circle and the library, there does not seem like enough time for the elderly or people with kids to get across. Mr. Cotten replied that there are timing standards based on the width of a street and ADA standards. He said that crossing time is extended when the pedestrian call button is used and, in some cases, that time is taken from the left turn signal. He said there are usually trade-offs and they try to accommodate most of the people.

Commissioner Mikolajczak encouraged staff to continue the research and said that accommodating bikes is important to the vitality of an area. He cited numerous examples in and around downtown Denver where the design of streets accommodates everyone and draws people in to the area.

Chair Sippel and Commissioner Steele encouraged staff to evaluate what other similar cities are doing and learn from their examples. Mr. Cotten said the Kaiser study will include that type of research.

Ms. Drybread summarized the process of evaluating the Comprehensive Plan and provided a handout regarding all of the related topics and speakers that the Planning Commission had heard so far this year. She discussed the next steps in the process including development of recommendations in June and a report to the City Council in July. Ms. Drybread encouraged Commissioners to review the existing Comprehensive Plan and consider what issues might need to be added, updated, or changed. She also handed out a worksheet that is intended as a fun, visioning exercise, and asked Commissioners to fill it out and bring to the next meeting to discuss.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Sippel adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and confirmed by

Martha Sippel (name), on 5/27/2014 (date)